

OUR NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE

NEW YORK, Dec. 8, 1874.

THE ITALIAN OPERA SEASON.

The Italian opera season is over for the present, and the Academy of Music will be deserted until Miss Kellogg takes possession with her English Opera Company. Mr. Strakosch has not met with the encouragement that his efforts deserve, and it is not unusual that he should feel discouraged. Last year he barely paid his expenses, and this year he has already lost \$40,000. The people go to the opera for one or two nights and then stop. That sort of patronage is not going to pay a manager. Then they want a new opera every night. Now it is twice as expensive to mount an opera than it was a year ago. At the Academy of Music, "Aida" and "Lohengrin" cost Mr. Strakosch \$20,000 each to bring out, and the scenery, costumes and music being new, and "Lohengrin" cost \$35,000 every night it is sung. Besides the regular troupe, the orchestra and chorus are largely increased, there are four solo concertos on the stage, besides horses and other smaller things. The manager, Mr. Strakosch, has provided Nilsson's dresses in this opera, and still holds them in his possession. Mr. Albani did not wish to wear the same garments that had come familiar to New York audiences on Nilsson's tall and slender figure, and her agent wrote Mr. Strakosch to that effect. Mr. Strakosch replied that he thought it hardly fair that he should go to the expense of new costumes when the old had been worn but a few times, but with his usual liberality he offered to pay for the making of Mr. Albani. He accepted this offer and appeared in new robes. The cost of new dresses for these two dresses was \$500. A prima donna as a rule finds her own dresses, the cost of which, judging by the above figures, must make quite a hole in her receipts.

THE REVIVAL OF LOHENGRIN.

The most important and interesting opera announced by Mr. Strakosch was postponed until the last week of the season, and then only sung twice. In deference, of course, to "Lohengrin." The town was on the tip toe of expectation to hear Mr. Albani in the role of Elsa, and the Academy was packed to the rafters for the performance. Mr. Albani's assumption of the role was thoroughly artistic; it is hard to find any fault with it, but it had not the inspiration of Nilsson's personation. Sigurd Carpi as Lohengrin, sang the music of his part with taste and some fire, but he was very poorly, or rather he did not act at all.

It was no small matter to learn such difficult parts as Elsa and Lohengrin in the short time allotted to Mr. Albani and Signor Carpi, and it is to their credit that they performed them as well as they did. Campaign had made a reputation in this opera before he came to New York, and therefore felt perfectly at home in his part. To Carpi it was all new and he is not to be blamed for feeling a little awkward.

PAINT, POWDER, ETC.

Since the early days of paint, powder and court plaster patches, the ladies have not disgraced themselves in the matter of fashion which they used to think belonged to an entirely different class of society. I am utterly surprised when looking around me at the theatre or opera, to see persons whom I know to be ladies, painted like ballet girls. It is utterly bewildered at the moment. The young ladies who follow the fashions appear with their faces painted, and often enameled, their eyes blacked, and sometimes with the heads painted red after a peculiar French style and their hair brought down low on the forehead, and plastered in regular scrolls, an inch above their fully curled ringlets. Then their lips are so heavily loaded with a salve-like preparation, that talking becomes an impossibility, and kissing utterly out of the question. Over this conglomeration, they wear a thin veil of the palest grey, sometimes dotted with black, which heightens the effect, to the detriment of the face. Under all this stuff they may have a most beautiful natural complexion, but that is not the fashion, so they cover it out of sight, but preserve it by bathing their faces in cold cream on going to bed. To say that these young ladies look down-right fast, would be doing them scant justice.

And in the evening in full dress, or full under a I should say, these ladies outdo themselves. I am still taking of ladies of good families, please bear in mind. The loveliness of their necks and their fathers and brothers blush for them. A well known actress attended a large party in this city recently, and the next day she said to me: "I assure you that when I looked about me at that collection of the *bon ton*, I was the only woman in the room, dressed with any regard to decency. Yet I have no doubt that they rather scorned my virtues and my beauty." I am often reminded of a verse on a dancing girl in Gilbert's Ballads:

And in sooth, it oft occurs
That while these matrons sigh,
Their dresses are lower than her's,
And sometimes half as high;
And their hair is hair they buy,
And they use their glasses, too,
In a way she'd blush to do.

Another device of the art of the period is an instep pad. If you happen to notice a pretty instep crossing the muddy streets, or getting into a stage, it is just as likely to be a delusion, for a bit of cotton help shoe-maker amazingly.

SAVING THE PENNIES.
An old adage says: "Save the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves," and judging from the number of savings-banks in this city and the patronage which they receive, it would seem that New York had tried the plan and found the adage a true one. The number of savings banks is on the increase, and the excess of assets over liabilities amount to about ten millions of dollars. The oldest ones are of course the most flourishing, as is seen in the case of the Bowers Savings Bank and the Bleecker Street Bank. This one on Bleecker Street is the oldest in the city, and the second or third oldest in the country, having been chartered in 1819 as the Bank for Savings in the City of New York. It was first situated on Chambers street, but was removed in 1856 to a handsome marble building on Bleecker street, which it occupies still. Out of the whole 10,187 depositors opening accounts \$2,711 were married women, 2,000 single, 382 widows 341 minors and 95 colored persons. The bank, since its organization, has opened about \$65,000 accounts, and received from depositors some \$110,000,000.

The Comptroller of the bank has been connected with it for forty years. The few residents on the Bleecker Street Bank to a great extent. The Bleecker Savings Bank, situated on Bleecker near Grand street was chartered in 1834, forty years since.

IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

Many people doubtless think that the practice of imprisonment for debt is a thing of the past, and that together with many other semi-barbarous customs of the early part of the present century is no longer in vogue. But they are mistaken. Although debtors may no longer be imprisoned for their debts under that name, they are really often locked up for no cause in the world. Of course New York is not the only place in the country where such things are done, but they are probably of more frequent occurrence here than elsewhere. The system, although much practiced, is none the less unjust. This is the way it is done: A man has a number of creditors. Wanting to get either money or some other sort of satisfaction from him, they tramp up pretty much any charge against him. Such as that he is about to leave the place, that he is about to sell his property, or in some other way escape the payment of his bills. A warrant is issued for the debtor's arrest, and he is made to answer the charge, whether it be a false one or not. Under the circumstances it is naturally hard to prove his innocence, and he is consequently compelled to pay a visit to the Ludlow Street Jail, an establishment for the reception of prisoners awaiting trial for almost any offense. Cases of a similar nature are far from being uncommon, and in fact the number of occupants of the Ludlow Street Jail is always large. Nearly all the persons who claim to be locked up for debt, and that is considered a much more respectable offense than forgery, or other crimes.

THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

Shall we observe the Sabbath according to the dictates of our conscience, or shall the laws compel us to follow a prescribed rule? is the question which is now agitating the clergy and laity of both this city and Brooklyn. There have been more places of amusement open on Sunday evenings in this city this season than ever before. Theatres, operas, and concerts have been in full blast upon these evenings, and attract large and attentive audiences. Naturally, the clergymen have become indignant at what they choose to call this desecration of the Lord's day and a number have denounced it from their pulpits. Mr. Talmage not only denounced Sunday theatres, but he pitched into the clergymen generally, giving them no quarter at all. Many people, probably play-goers themselves, think that Mr. Talmage's attacks upon the stage are not because he honestly looks upon theatres as pest-houses, but because by abusing and preaching against them, he creates a sensation, and gets his name thoroughly advertised in the press. In his last sermon on the stage, Mr. Talmage stated that he had received threatening letters on account of his views. Some of these letters he said, threatened personal violence, and he said he would be called upon them to do his worst, informing them that he went to Lafayette avenue every Sunday night after the services, and added that they were too great towards to attack him. This statement was received with "great applause," by the vast audience assembled in the Tabernacle, and perhaps by the fifty policemen who were scattered through the building to preserve order. On Sunday last, the subject was well aired in the churches, and even Mr. Beecher, who had heretofore kept out of the discussion, took up a lance. While he does not approve of Sunday amusement, he does not think that our law makers have a right to legislate upon the subject. A petition bearing many well known names, among them those of two distinguished actors, called the attention of the Board of Police Commissioners to the law prohibiting "Theatrical and other entertainments of the stage on Sunday." This law has long been a dead letter, that the police authorities are doubtful about enforcing it.

Setting every other question aside, we need Sunday day rest, and there are many among us who cannot remain quietly at home if the theatres are open. What will be done remains to be seen. In the meantime the theatres will continue open on Sunday as well as other nights.

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